



Director of
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SURINAME: Seeking Economic Aid

Army Commander Bouterse hopes to obtain \$30 million in aid from several countries to replace assistance suspended by the Netherlands. [redacted]

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In a recent interview in a Brazilian newspaper, Bouterse said he will look to Cuba and other "socialist" nations for aid only if the West turns him down. Brazil and Venezuela head his list of likely sources of funds. Acting Foreign Minister Naarendorp went to Caracas last week. [redacted]

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Comment: Bouterse apparently recognizes the suspension of Dutch aid will have severe economic consequences. He is trying to demonstrate to the alienated population that he has the situation under control. [redacted]

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The fear of Cuban involvement could prompt the Brazilians to offer some token financial aid or open a line of export credit. Financial constraints, however, would preclude more substantial assistance. [redacted]

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Venezuela probably will be more responsive, because Caracas wants to preempt increased Cuban involvement and obtain Suriname's support for its border dispute with Guyana and its bid for membership in the Nonaligned Movement. While in Caracas, Naarendorp may try to establish contact with Libyan representatives. [redacted]

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Bouterse is unlikely to be able to fill the gap created by the loss of Dutch assistance. As a result, he also may try to obtain some help from Cuba. [redacted]

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FINLAND: Government To Resign

Prime Minister Sorsa, exasperated by the intransigence of Communist members of the ruling coalition over planned increases in defense spending, has announced the resignation of his government.

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The Communist-front People's Democratic League refused to approve purchases of military equipment, although most would come from the USSR and would help alleviate the Soviet trade deficit with Finland. The front would not compromise by abstaining in the vote on the defense budget.

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Comment: The Communist front, faced with the prospect of substantial losses in the parliamentary elections scheduled for March, has been under pressure from hardliners to try to improve its electoral position by leaving the government and by campaigning against cuts in social services. Sorsa likely would have preferred not to have the Communists campaigning openly in opposition to the government so close to an election but probably concluded that he had no other choice. The Communists, because of their stubbornness on the defense issue, appear certain to be left out of any coalition in the near future.

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The remaining coalition partners--the Social Democrats, the Center Party, and the Swedish People's Party--still command a narrow majority in parliament and probably could maintain a government until the elections. Although Sorsa is most likely to establish an interim government by filling vacated cabinet seats with members of his Social Democratic Party and the Center Party, he may suggest instead that President Koivisto appoint a caretaker government of civil servants. This solution would allow Finland's politicians to campaign, leaving civil servants to bear the responsibility for the unpopular decisions needed to cope with Finland's deepening recession.

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LEBANON: Possible New Factional Fighting

[redacted] the US Embassy reports the Christian Lebanese Forces militia may be planning a major attack against its Druze adversaries in the Shuf and Alayh mountain districts southeast of Beirut. The militia is drafting young men and sending them to the town of Brih in preparation for an attack to "liberate" the Shuf.// [redacted]

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Comment: //The Christians view the Shuf and Alayh districts, now predominantly Druze, as their traditional territory and want to regain control there. [redacted]

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